

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L JIDDA 1926

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ASCH, SEDU, SA
SUBJECT: HIGH SCHOOL IN SAUDI ARABIA

REF JIDDA 1441

1. AS ADVISED BY REFTEL, EMBASSY HAS STUDIED FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING HIGH SCHOOL IN SAUDI ARABIA WITH COMMUNITY LEADERS. CONSENSUS IS THAT WHEREAS IT IS DESIRABLE TO HAVE HIGH SCHOOL CHILDREN ATTEND SCHOOL IN COUNTRY, IT MUST BE RECOGNIZED THAT THE PROBABILITY IS THAT A SERIOUS CONFLICT BETWEEN ACTIVITIES OF HIGH SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN AND TRADITIONAL SAUDI WAY OF LIFE WOULD OCCUR. AS MORE FOREIGNERS ENTER THE KINGDOM TO WORK, A CONFLICT IN LIFESTYLES IS PERHAPS INEVITABLE. WE DO NOT WISH TO WITNESS, HOWEVER, OUR HIGH SCHOOL BECOMING THE CATALYTIC AGENT RESULTING IN FRICTION AND HARM TO OUTSTANDING RELATIONS AMERICANS HAVE ALWAYS HAD WITH SAUDIS. OVERALL REACTION OF COMMUNITY LEADERS IS THAT UNTIL THE QUESTION OF A HIGH SCHOOL IN SAUDI ARABIA CAN BE GIVEN CAREFUL PROFESSIONAL CONSIDERATION ESTABLISHMENT OF A HIGH SCHOOL SHOULD BE DEFERRED. EMBASSY CONCURS, WITH PROVISIO THAT SINCE PLANNING FOR A HIGH SCHOOL IN SAUDI ARABIA INVOLVES POLITICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPONDERABLES, THE FINAL DECISION ON WHETHER TO GO AHEAD OR NOT SHOULD BE LEFT TO THE AMBASSADOR.

2. THE EMBASSY THEREFORE WISHES TO INSURE THAT PROPER,
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FAR-SIGHTED PLANNING IS NOW INITIATED TO LAY THE FOUNDATION

FOR THE POSSIBLE HIGH SCHOOL OF THE FUTURE. WE DO NOT WISH TO SEE AN ILL-CONCEIVED PLANT HASTILY DEVELOPED NOR A FACILITY CONSTRUCTED UNLESS IT INCLUDES THE AMENITIES AFFORDED BY THE BEST HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE UNITED STATES. A HIGH SCHOOL IN SAUDI ARABIA MUST BE BASED ON THE FOLLOWING CONCEPTS: A SOUND CURRICULUM AND EXTENDED EXTRACURRICULAR PROGRAM OFFERING THE FULLEST RANGE OF ATHLETIC, SOCIAL, AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES; A PLANT AND EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM WHICH FULLY REFLECTS AN UNDERSTANDING OF SAUDI SENSITIVITIES AND CULTURE; AND AN AWARENESS THAT THE HIGH SCHOOL COULD BE THE CAPSTONE OF A COUNTRYWIDE NON-MUSLIM, U.S.-TYPE SCHOOL SYSTEM. (CONSIDERATION SHOULD, THEREFORE, BE GIVEN ALSO TO THE POSSIBILITY OF INTEGRATING THE CURRICULUMS OFFERED BY THE VARIOUS U.S. SCHOOLS NOW OPERATING IN THE KINGDOM WITH THAT OF THE HIGH SCHOOL.)

3. ACCORDINGLY, WE BELIEVE THE TIME PROPITIOUS TO REQUEST THE FORMATION OF A STUDY GROUP COMPRISED OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE STATE DEPT.'S OFFICE OF OVERSEAS SCHOOLS AND THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT'S USDESEA WHO COULD CAREFULLY REVIEW THESE AND OTHER QUESTIONS RELEVANT TO ESTABLISHING A HIGH SCHOOL IN SAUDI ARABIA. THIS STUDY COULD BEGIN IN WASHINGTON, BUT WE WOULD HOPE A VISIT TO SAUDI ARAIA BY AN EDUCATIONAL EXPERT WOULD BE POSSIBLE LATER ON.

4. THE EMBASSY, THEREFORE, OFFERS ITS FULL RESOURCES AND ITS ASSURANCE THAT LOCAL SCHOOL OFFICIALS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS WELCOME A VISIT BY USG EXPERT(S) TO SAUDI ARABIA TO REVIEW THE ON-THE-SCENE PROSPECTS FOR A HIGH SCHOOL.
PORTER

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